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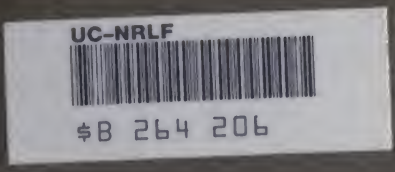

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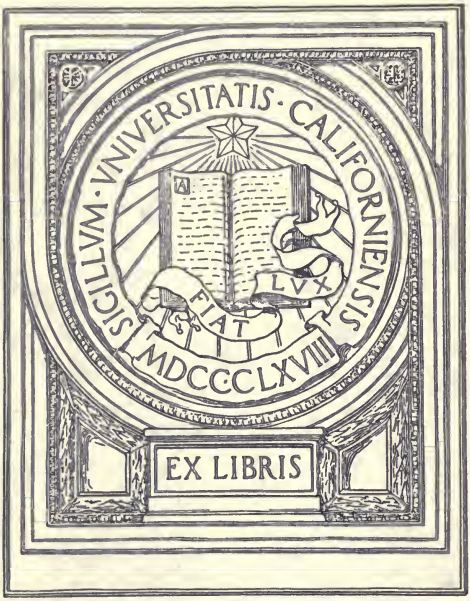
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◆◆◆◆WEEKLY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING ECONOMIES IN 1931 AND 1932◆◆◆◆◆◆

An analysis based on a survey of 171 newspapers representative of the rural publishing business » » »

By
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HERMAN ROE, DIRECTOR,
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA

. . . Foreword

RADICAL CHANGES in our material prosperity have produced a set of influences affecting the press, along with other social institutions. Hard facts are producing hard thinking. This dynamic period is compelling resourceful publishers to re-evaluate their problems, inducing them to make economic adjustments which have their influence throughout the entire newspaper organization.

Professor Thomas F. Barnhart's study, "Weekly Newspaper Economies in 1931 and 1932," is a first attempt to observe economic adjustments in the rural publishing field throughout the country as a whole. The problem has been brought before several state press association meetings, however, and is coming to be a fundamental topic of discussion. Professor Barnhart has made a beginning in a national study; attempting a modest survey of economies through judicious sampling of key newspapers, with the expectation that it may be carried forward by others who will delve more intensively into separate problems in various geographic sections.

The economic adjustments that are in process are not merely of business office routine, but affect the news and editorial aspects of the press. Just how vital these changes will be in the long run, is for the future to say, but the study has definite social implications. In the main it attempts a *brass-tacks* exposition of economies by individual newspapers at the present moment. Professor Barnhart confesses that much work remains to be done in the analysis of changes of news and editorial content as a result of economic readjustment.

The study was prepared in furtherance of a function of the University of Minnesota in its cooperation with the professions represented by professional training in the various schools and departments of the University. The exploratory work was made possible by a grant from the Graduate School Research Fund of the Universi-

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ty. Professor Barnhart, who undertook the work, is the former assistant field manager of the Washington Press Association. Publication is undertaken by the National Editorial Association. Mr. Herman Roe, field director, expressed interest in the study from its inception. The Association is bringing it to the attention of publishers in the hope that it may be of some aid to those interested in the field of weekly journalism.

RALPH D. CASEY,
Chairman, Department of Journalism,
University of Minnesota.

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Timely and Valuable

This "economy" survey—replete with "experience" testimony from publishers of representative weekly newspapers—is the type of study that the Research Bureau of the National Editorial Association welcomes and is pleased to publish.

The boiled down analysis of economies in all departments instituted by publishers confronted with a serious situation will bring many timely and valuable suggestions to other publishers.

On behalf of the N.E.A.—and of weekly publishers generally—I express appreciation to Mr. Barnhart for this important study.

HERMAN ROE,
Director, Research Bureau,
National Editorial Association.

. . . Editorial

A NUMBER OF ECONOMIES involving the editing and publishing of the weekly newspaper have been dictated by general business conditions during the past one and one-half years. In order that these economies might be studied and analyzed, questionnaires were sent to a select list of newspapers of varying sizes. Source material was obtained, also, by a more detailed correspondence with a number of publishers. Each section of the country was represented in the replies. A high percentage of questionnaire returns was received. Memoranda and notes from 171 publishers throughout the country serve as a basis for this exposition of newspaper economies and the conclusions embodied in this study. The writer has also checked over the files of several of the papers under observation.

The results of the survey indicate that new methods are being introduced in the editorial, business, advertising, circulation, mechanical, job printing and stock room departments of the weekly newspaper publishing business. These are being accompanied, necessarily, by a modification of the weekly newspaper. The most noticeable changes are in the editorial and news sections, in the selection and display of reading matter.

Frills and furbelows in the editorial and reportorial departments of many of the country's weekly newspapers are being discarded, with an almost complete return today to "bread-and-butter" news, editorial, and local feature copy. Economies of this sort have been effected by a large percentage of the replying papers. Publishers, for the most part, are discarding feature material because of the higher valuation being placed on the columns of their newspaper for straight news matter and advertising.

The weekly newspaper publishing business, like many others, had developed several costly habits, mediocre methods, and unnecessary practices during prosperity years. Many papers assumed new and costly services and hundreds now find themselves in positions which dictate drastic economies. Profits have decreased to a point which compels many plants to close their doors. This withdrawal from the field leaves some communities without newspapers. Students of the newspaper are pointing out that only the marginal newspapers are being eliminated. That is true. But it is apparent that the healthy newspapers,

too, may be endangered unless they keep careful eye on the economies of publishing.

The aim of most editors is to give as much as possible for the money, without cutting down the value of the paper. Thus the discriminatory burden of selection is increased. The trend is toward elimination of expensive features which were added in time of expansion.

ELIMINATION OF FEATURES

Of the newspapers that co-operated in this survey 18 per cent state definitely that during the past two years, or for an even longer period, they have not used any of the following syndicated features: cross-word and other puzzles, editorials, hints to house-wives, farm columns, health columns, comic strips, poems, editorial page cartoons, humor columns, serial story, weekly news review, miscellany.

Of the papers that have used features in the past two years, syndicated material has been eliminated in the following percentages: cross-word and other puzzles, 49 per cent; editorials, 45 per cent; hints to house-wives, 41 per cent; farm columns, 39 per cent; health columns, 38 per cent; comic strips, 37 per cent; poems, 36 per cent; editorial page cartoons, 33 per cent; humor columns, 33 per cent; serial story, 31 per cent; weekly news review, 26 per cent; and miscellany, 20 per cent. Three publishers have discontinued state news reviews; one, church news; and one has omitted the state capital news letter.

The following is a graphic presentation of the amount of syndicated materials that has been eliminated:

PRESENTED IN GRAPH FORM

Features Eliminated	Per Cent 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Crossword and Other Puzzles	49
Editorials	45
Hints to Housewives	41
Farm Columns	39
Health Columns	38
Comic Strips	37
Poems	36
Editorial Page Cartoons	33
Humor Columns	33
Serial Story	31
Weekly News Review	26
Miscellany	20

It is natural, too, that with the sharp curtailment in space, the publicity writers are having to exercise a good deal of ingenuity in order that their copy may pass through the type-setting machines.

The selection and rejection of features appear

to have been made on a basis of local reader interest and circulation value. The elimination of features has been undertaken, apparently, on a gradual basis. The first type of feature to disappear from the columns of the paper appears to have been the cross-word puzzle. Syndicated editorials have been the next to feel editorial scrutiny and elimination. Much of the syndicated material which has appeared in the weekly press is of a kind designed to divert, amuse, and entertain the reader. It is conceded that the newspaper has taken on the function of amusing the reader as well as of enlightening him with news information, of counselling him, and, finally, of interpreting the news of the day. What will be the effect of reducing syndicated materials that fall in the entertainment category?

Editors have realized that they run a risk of losing circulation by eliminating the feature altogether. They have in most cases, therefore, substituted the local for the syndicated feature. More attention is being given to the development of local news coverage as an offset to the loss of the syndicated feature supplied from out of town. This is a good sign. It shows clearly that the home-town weekly is getting back to the earlier fundamentals of editing. Another interesting sign is that only those departments and features intended for special groups of marginal readers are being eliminated.

It is clear, then, that newspapers which eliminate features from their pages should have a plan of developing local news to substitute for the loss. The survey shows that in many cases no provision has been made for reducing the size of the paper, or for the development of more local copy. What, then, has taken the place of the features? The files of many of the surveyed papers reveal that in place of feature material, expertly-prepared propaganda and publicity have crept in. Many large "plugger" ads appear, too. The major part of the propaganda has been shipped to the newspaper in convenient form of mats and stereotypes. The material is plainly for the benefit of a few industries contriving the propaganda.

Among the large assortment of two- and three-column illustrated feature articles of a subtle publicity nature that have appeared during the past one and one-half years, readers have been made better acquainted with the uses of such products as tea, leather, rubber, pulp, lumber, soups, shingles, pineapple, coffee, soaps, perfumes, writing paper, automobiles, wrought iron pipe, electric rates, electric appliances, sugar, citrus fruit,

wood and cement. Scores of other manufactured products for limited sectional sale have been "advertised" through the medium of propaganda stories.

One can readily visualize how this propaganda material gets into print. You are busily at work editing a weekly paper. Monday's mail brings a three-column mounted and illustrated stereotype of a number of persons of national importance, each bedecked with flowers in his coat lapel. It is scanned hastily and placed on the desk top, to give way to other mail. It acts as a paper weight for a few days. On Thursday afternoon it is picked up gingerly and transferred to a three-column eight-inch hole on the back page. When the edition is off and you study the lay-out in your paper more carefully, you find, alas, that it is publicity for orchids.

But it saved the day by getting the paper to press on time.

Propaganda is hardly a worthy substitute for syndicated feature material.

WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

With this as an introduction, let us consider how editors have modified their editorial product for the sake of economy, and how they have in a number of concrete cases substituted new categories of editorial material in place of syndicated features which they may have eliminated. The trend toward the elimination of features is a general one and evidence of this appeared in the following quotations from answers to the questionnaire:

The Ladysmith (Wis.) *News* stresses local features and local news events. "We used a total of 86 news pictures in 41 different issues during the year," writes the publisher. "We have never used any great amount of syndicated features of any kind, and with the exception of a serial story, have confined our space almost entirely to local news and features, editorial comments, and a farm department which we do eliminate for three months during the winter to cut cost."

The Roy (N. M.) *Record* heads its reply as follows: "Have dispensed with all plate material and although it is necessary that we print but four to six pages occasionally, instead of the customary eight as formerly, we endeavor to get all local copy, at least that of state interest. Have found that an item concerning the purchase of a new Ford by one of our farmers is of greater reader interest than an item telling that the Prince of Wales fell from the top of the Empire State Building."

The Elkhart (Kans.) *Tri-State News* editor writes that he has never used extensive syndicated material, feeling that local touch should be used, even in farm and women's pages and certainly in editorial and news sections.

"The Washington Bicentennial mats are providing interesting feature material," writes the Chilton (Wis.) *Times*. The use of syndicated material is minimized, the editor preferring to write his own local features.

The Grand Rapids (Minn.) *Herald-Review* writes: "We have cut news features in order to establish a satisfactory relationship of news and advertising." The Marshall (Minn.) *News-Messenger* has a home recipe column, substituting it for syndicated material.

The Batesville (Ark.) *Record* reports that it has substituted home written features for several syndicated features.

The Citizen Publishing Company, LaGrange, Ill., replies: "It has been our theory that the only policy for a suburban newspaper is to devote its space exclusively to local news, keeping away from features, departments and general news wherein it might be competing with Chicago papers. We believe in sticking to the field where the metropolitan dailies cannot compete with us."

"We try to get out as many pages each issue as formerly," writes the Lodi (Calif.) *Sentinel*. "One of the big savings has been made in features. Previously we bought considerable plate material, and paid heavy transportation charges. Now we buy mats of the same material, and always keep several columns."

Incidentally, included in the list of papers which are gradually substituting local copy for syndicated feature material are The Richfield (Utah) *Reaper,* The Mountain Lake (Minn.) *Observer,* The Crystal Falls (Mich.) *Diamond Drill,* The Lakeland (Fla.) *News,* The Appleton (Minn.) *Press,* The Colfax (Iowa) *Tribune,* The Sapulpa (Okla.) *Democrat News,* The Bloomington (Ind.) *Star,* The Pipestone (Minn.) *Leader,* The Rockdale (Texas) *Reporter,* The Junction City (Ore.) *Times,* The Peru (Ind.) *Republican,* The Burlington (Wash.) *Journal,* The Medford (Okla.) *Patriot-Star* and *Journal,* The Shakopee (Minn.) *Argus-Tribune,* The Tucumcari (N.M.) *News,* The Bonners Ferry (Idaho) *Herald,* The Fennimore (Wis.) *News,* The Clinton (Mo.) *Eye,* The Rice Lake (Wis.) *Chronotype,* The Cokato (Minn.) *Enterprise,* The Lake Crystal (Minn.) *Tribune,* The Vernonia (Ore.) *Eagle,* The Mount Clemons (Mich.) *Monitor,* The Mille

Lacs (Milaca, Minn.) *County Times,* The Wabasha (Minn.) *Herald-Standard,* The Askov (Minn.) *American,* and the Simcoe (Ontario, Canada) *Reformer.*

Local copy is being substituted for syndicated material by the major part of the newspapers listed elsewhere in the different sections of the report.

"We do not edit closely, rather we run more news than formerly. We have tried to keep up the editorial end and find that folks generally appreciate this. We have made a slight gain in circulation, due, we think, to more local news."

The St. James (Minn.) *Plaindealer* has evolved a more elastic scheme of avoiding extra pages by getting away from the tradition of allocating departments and features on the same pages. Variation and shifting of matter permits use of all copy, reduces machine hours, power bill, and costs generally.

The Mott (N. D.) *Pioneer Press* has changed its format from a seven-column, 13-em width, 22 inch depth to a seven-column, 12-em width, 20 inch depth. It also records a change from a standard eight page edition to the four page standard, with additional pages only when business merits it. All features have been eliminated.

The Breckenridge (Minn.) *Gazette-Telegram* replies: "Stories which resemble free advertising from local merchants have been discontinued."

The *East Side Journal* of Kirkland (Wash.) writes as follows: "We have recently combined all of our correspondents that can be reached through our local telephone exchange. This saves us about $20 per month and besides eliminates a lot of little petty items that we never should have carried anyway and which took the machine man's time. We have cut our working week from six to five days, stepping up our efficiency to make up for lost time. Our lost day is taken up at various intervals during the week, different hours for different men."

"We have cut all features," the Kirkland publisher concludes.

The Waupun (Wis.) *Leader-News* has "gone tabloid" with its Monday issue, retaining its six-column makeup for the Thursday issues. Volume of correspondence was cut 30 per cent.

The Waseca (Minn.) *Journal* points out a clean-cut economy in having all headlines machine set. The *Foster County Independent* (Carrington, N. D.) now sets all correspondence in smaller

type, but pays the same rate an inch for correspondence.

The present survey indicates that a large number of the smaller weekly newspapers have adopted the ready print method of reducing publication costs. This procedure, editors point out, enables them to maintain the size of their papers; to reduce very materially their production costs; to increase advertising effectiveness through a fairly complete paper; and to continue business in less lucrative fields.

The Peru (Ind.) *Republican* has adopted a policy of close editing of copy; The *Delta Reporter* (Gladstone, Mich.) has combined correspondents' territories that seem to overlap; the Owatonna (Minn.) *Journal-Chronicle* has cut off correspondents in sparsely settled sections where little news originates, and where few subscribers live; the Bonners Ferry (Idaho) *Herald* has simplified its head schedules, thus saving time all around. Most of the economies listed in the foregoing have been adopted in toto or slightly modified form by scores of replying papers.

COUNTRY CORRESPONDENCE

Country correspondence, hitherto considered sacrosanct, is being watched with an eagle-eye. Several editors indicate they have adopted smaller body type, *strict* editing for non-timely items, omission of all quad-lines by using correspondence briefs in "run-in" paragraphs, with a machine dash to separate individual items.

Correspondents of the Aurora (Nebr.) *Republican-Register* have been placed on a weekly space quota, above which they are not paid. "Suggested 'boiling' items and still giving essentials of live news."

The Chehalis (Wash.) *Bee-Nugget* editor has purchased a "larger and bluer" blue pencil, edits copy closely, and cuts out much correspondence not strictly news, but heretofore allowed to go. "I've adopted the head style of the *Linotype News,* which saves time in writing, setting and reading," he writes.

"We have 30 correspondents who write each week," reports the Freeport (Ohio) *Press.* "Find they are good holders of circulation. Strictly local news is the fundamental secret of a successful weekly. We run no free publicity of any kind and very little syndicated matter."

The *Custer County Chief,* Broken Bow, Nebr., has increased its large staff of correspondents from 100 to 115. "Fifteen of these correspondents are resident in incorporated towns, 12 of which have local newspapers," the editor writes.

"The others are rural correspondents who receive no pay other than the usual courtesies extended—a Christmas present, stamps and stationery and copy of the paper, yet more than $2000 was spent in 1931 for correspondence."

This paper, admittedly unusual, has no editorial page, publishes no syndicated matter, serials, poems or similar features, but concentrates on county news.

The Fallon (Nev.) *Standard* reports that a reporter has been laid off and that the remainder of the staff "is working harder."

"We are not editing copy more closely for the reason that with less display advertising we have more space to fill," the editor writes. "Rural correspondents are not paid."

The Logan (W. Va.) *Banner* reports, "We have no paid correspondents, and we supply material and C.O.D. envelopes, thus eliminating use of firm's stamps on personal mail." This paper also offers its correspondents a 40 per cent commission on subs sent in from writer's territory.

Weekly papers are developing systematic plans for keeping records of stories, notes and filings for futures. Care of cuts, especially halftones, seems to be of increasing concern to many publishers.

THE MINNESOTA PLAN

One hundred Minnesota weekly papers are attempting to aid 1600 rural correspondents in the more careful selection of news and its preparation. The Minnesota Editorial Association central office is mailing a series of 16 lessons on the subject, prepared with a view to presenting in interesting fashion some of the do's and don't's arising in the collection and writing of this type of news. Frequent examples of good correspondence, taken from the files of Minnesota papers, are used for illustrative purposes in the lesson sheets. The course covers the fundamental rules of news writing, showing different types of leads and stories arising in the average Minnesota community. Sources of news and timely stories are cited. Correspondents are privileged to send in carbon copies or clipped columns of their material for suggestions and criticism from the department of journalism at the University of Minnesota, which is sponsoring and writing the series as a service to the weekly field. It is felt that some such service would be valuable for all weeklies because it teaches rural correspondents to eliminate unimportant "chatter" and intercommunity visiting items.

. . . Business Office

NEARLY ALL REPLIES indicate a definite trend toward reduction in number of employees, shorter working hours, fewer working days and consolidation of jobs, especially on the mechanical side. Office workers are undergoing similar adjustments. The reportorial and advertising groups seem to have suffered least. Nearly all replies showed some payroll adjustment, but wage reductions are being made with reluctance.

PLANS NOW WORKING

The editor of the Okanogan (Wash.) *Independent* states that the principal economy on his paper was the reduction in the number of days for the mechanical department. Certain workmen are placed on a four-day basis. The Wadena (Minn.) *Pioneer Journal* has established a five-day week of 42 hours.

The Belleville (Kan.) *Telescope* has curtailed the society reporter's time to three days instead of six. The Chewelah (Wash.) *Independent* has adopted a part-time "devil." The Ontonagan (Mich.) *Herald* requires each employee to take a week off under a job rotation plan with other employees. Many variations of these plans were revealed, each depending on the set-up in the particular office. It is worthwhile to point out that in several cases where an employee resigned, the remaining members of the staff absorbed his duties.

The Harwich (Mass.) *Independent* has unfolded a plan whereby the entire shop is working on a percentage basis—the more production, the higher the wages for the men. The foreman, in full charge of the plant, pays his own subordinates. He receives 35 per cent on all work performed, and the paper looks to him for production—and that gets it—for less, writes the editor.

The Williston (N. D.) *Herald* has climbed into the seat of economic planning for its own employees with the plan of a 40-hour week, giving employees credit for 44 hours and placing extra 4 hours credit to sinking fund to draw 6 per cent interest.

The Quakertown (Pa.) *Free Press* has evolved an unusual plan. "Employees are using about 15 per cent of their wages in 'trade' orders and letting the 15 per cent stand until it reaches a drawing amount of $50 to $100."

Marcy B. Darnall of the Florence (Ala.) *Herald,* reports: "Closer supervision of employees to

increase production. Most employees on five-day week; others used as needed, minimum is three days. None laid off entirely."

The Lodi (Calif.) *Sentinel* reports: "Economies effected in the payroll have been worked out as follows: In the front office each employee lays off one day a week, taking a corresponding cut in pay. In the back room each man lays off one day a week, but distributes the time over the week. This averages slightly more than two hours a day on slack days. In this way we keep the whole staff intact and each member of it is taking his cut."

"Have not yet cut wages, but have cut hours," reports Clarence Ellington of the Chehalis (Wash.) *Bee-Nugget*. "In my shop the boys work on an hour basis of 48 hours, paid so much an hour. With decreased activity, have staggered the force so some of the boys work four days one week, others five days; next week I give the two who had four days, five days; and the two with five days, four days."

The Chiloquin (Ore.) *Review* editor indicates that the "biggest single saving, during the slack time in the shop, has been to rotate our crew. They understand that we are not trying to hurt them, but in order that the boss and crew can live, both must take their share of loss. In my main shop here, I have been able to get along with almost a 50 per cent reduction in labor overhead. Proportionately I am making more money this way."

The Fairbury (Nebr.) *News* has eliminated payment for overtime this year. "Payment for extra work to be made by allowing employees to take off a similar amount of time on Saturdays or quiet periods."

Charles H. Miller of the Breckenridge (Minn.) *Telegram* has a happy solution of his problem. He says: "The publisher of the small town who knows the mechanical end of the business, knows that good men are hard to find in small towns. All of our employees have been trained in our office. Starting in while in high school, they are now married and know the trade from A to Z. These men draw less than those of the large cities, yet they are as good craftsmen. We never lay our men off during slack periods, and in this manner get the best they have. Each man produces a good profit for us month by month."

The Utica (Ohio) *Herald* has reduced the number of hours of employees but retains same rate of pay; and the Elbow Lake (Minn.) *Herald*

reports a five-day week policy except in busy times.

CREATING NEW SALESMEN

Efforts to employ the less essential and part-time workers in other tasks during their off-days has met with varying success, but all results seem worth while.

The Wareham (Mass.) *Courier* reports: "We have not reduced employees and shall not do so. By extra effort we keep our force busy on productive work. No shorter week, no reductions in pay."

Employees of the *Ingham County News* (Mason, Mich.) are spending their spare time in drumming up new business.

Mechanical employees of the Waupun (Wis.) *Leader-News* are selling job printing on commission. A city directory, not frequently found in small towns and cities, but nevertheless useful, was planned and published. The employee-plan has kept several printing jobs at home, the publisher reports.

Others are sending out mechanical workers, reporters and office assistants to obtain new subscribers and to collect circulation accounts. A few report that they have uncovered latent sales ability in reporters and pressmen, who were asked to try their hand at digging up classified, and to sell professional card ads to dentists, doctors, lawyers and small non-advertisers.

CREDITS AND COLLECTIONS

The Birmingham (Mich.) *Eccentric* places stress on careful granting of credit and persistent collections. "We have tried to re-adjust our attitude toward business conditions of today, by admitting that today's business is normal, and adjusting our efforts toward bringing about improvements. If we continued to gaze back at 1928-29, today would look bleaker than it really is."

The Medford (Wis.) *Star-News* editor has availed himself of aid in the collection problem. He says, "We are using everyone in our force, back or front office, for collections when their work is slack. It has helped."

MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS

Weekly publishers are casting an appraising eye at their telephone bills and unessential items for shop and office. The Greenwich (Conn.) *Press* reports it has inaugurated a plan of filling out a slip for every toll call. Results—"It reduced our telephone bill last month $10 below the

average." Others are accomplishing the same end by close checking on persons making calls, and similar procedures in the front office. The De Pere (Wis.) *Journal-Democrat* indicates that it has made a saving by cutting off one office phone. Others have done likewise.

The Montevideo (Minn.) *News* reports a reduction in space rates to rural correspondents from five to three cents an inch.

The Logan (W. Va.) *Banner* writes, "We are adopting a schedule of rates whereby steady (each issue) advertiser is given better rate than even large space users."

The Chiloquin (Ore.) *Review* editor says: "We have slashed our overhead to the bone. We are getting to be very careful in the buying of stock and supplies of all kinds. Where formerly we sent the orders to a certain firm, now we shop among a number of firms before buying stock or supplies. I firmly believe that this current business unpleasantness has made businessmen out of many publishers who were often too prone to follow the path of least resistance in their business dealings. We are sorry to say that there are some who were not cured, but put out of business."

Other suggestions brought out in the survey for cutting costs are as follows: use of the reverse side of received letters as the office's copy or carbon of the reply for one-page letters to save time in filing and eliminate use of second sheets; payment of accounts payable within discount period.

EMPLOYEES' WAGES

Of the papers studied, 34 per cent reported they had reduced the number of their employees.

Of the total number of employees dismissed, 21 per cent were removed because of reorganization in office staffs, 19 per cent were classed as mechanical workers, 18 per cent were compositors, 10 per cent were machine operators, 8 per cent were reporters, 6 per cent were pressmen, 4 per cent were advertising solicitors, 3 per cent job printers, 3 per cent were bookkeepers, and the remaining 8 per cent eliminated were divided equally in the five positions of proof readers, circulation, editorial, apprentice, and janitor, making about 1½ per cent for each division.

Fewer than 2 per cent of the replying papers indicate the addition of new employees during the period under study. With the exception of one case of a reporter, the new employees were all placed in circulation departments.

Although the questionnaire contained no specific questions on wage reductions, it may be pointed out that 4.6 per cent of the papers voluntarily reported reductions of from 10 per cent to 20 per cent in salaries in all departments.

The survey revealed that 28.5 per cent of those replying are using cost finding systems.

. . . Advertising

REPLIES IN THE ADVERTISING SECTION of the survey reveal a "tightening up" in every branch of the department. Pages show higher percentages of paid space per page; papers eliminate extra pages where possible; expenditures for advertising services and features are being pared to the bone in some cases and increased in others, and services to space-buyers are being curtailed.

The Burlington (Wash.) *Journal* reports a "group use of cut service with neighboring papers, WNU sending each of us proof books, and cuts to the central shop."

The Claremont (Calif.) *Courier* reports: "An arrangement with three other newspapers whereby we each solicit certain accounts and set certain ads, all of us using the same ad when it is to run in all three newspapers."

The Wadena (Minn.) *Pioneer Journal,* to compete with ol' man depression, has set up a yardstick for the number of pages it prints. Each must carry a 40 per cent advertising load. Condensing of good news matter makes the task easier.

The Belleville (Kan.) *Telescope* reports that it is having success with a plan of allowing a large space user a small discount to get copy in five days early.

The Waseca (Minn.) *Journal* editor says: "We buy a good mat service but have it shipped only six months a year, selecting the months we believe most desirable. By contracting for 12 months (or issues) we get regular contract price."

The Roy (N. M.) *Record* and the Brockport (N. Y.) *Republican-Democrat* report they have found it possible to eliminate their cut and copy service entirely by using old mats. Many others reported they were using a less expensive and smaller service, for the time being at least, and several have re-arranged their schedules so that they now receive mats every other month, excluding November and December. Other papers are arranging for mat services which are bought in trade for advertising.

The Alexander City (Ala.) *Outlook* reports on a plan of writing ad copy complete enough to route almost entirely through the type-setting machine. Nearly all indicated the adoption of a plan to route ad copy through the shop to the end of obtaining maximum production during low-work hours in shop.

The Plymouth (Mich.) *Mail* finds that one advertising service diligently used now does the work of two services.

The Forest Grove (Ore.) *News-Times* is using a more expensive cut and copy service than it formerly used. The editor explains that "with the falling off of national business we have had to work our local accounts harder to keep up a satisfactory volume. To do this we thought it advisable to use a better and larger service at an increase of $2.50 per month." A few others make similar reports.

Instead of economies, more intensive advertising solicitation plus the introduction of special advertising features which increased linage are reported by the Northfield (Minn.) *News*. A "Food and Market Basket" page, carrying a "Favorite Recipe" feature, with a free copy of a "Northfield News Cook Book" to subscribers in which to paste recipes, attracted new advertisers (grocery stores and meat markets) and also new subscribers, as well as holding present subscribers. A Betty Lou visiting-the-shops chatty advertising feature brought added linage and new advertisers.

The Aurora (Nebr.) *Republican-Register* writes that "we bought a more expensive and better ad service, but get it only every other month, with the privilege of supplementing, at small cost, from months we do not buy at nominal cost. This completely meets our needs and effects a good saving."

The Chiloquin (Ore.) *Review* reports that its "advertising department, more than ever before, is using the best of the methods in vogue on daily papers. One way in which we are keeping our volume of advertising up to near normal is to play up seasonal breaks and any big event in which we can make a county-wide tie-up. Heretofore, only daily papers have attempted this service, but we are giving our merchants a chance to merchandise in the latest accepted methods. It sells copy."

Advertising contract revisions show that large space buyers are being given slight reductions.

PENNSYLVANIA PAPER ADDS OFFICE

The Cambridge Springs (Pa.) *Enterprise-News* has taken the depression "devil" by the horns. "We have opened a full-time Erie (Pa.) office to solicit advertising in that large field for our two newspapers at Cambridge Springs and Union City; our theory being that if local advertisers will not justify a semi-weekly, we have a

right to keep the paper up to standard by selling the space where it is more appreciated. On the theory that more selling time is necessary in the local field, our regular solicitor has been relieved of Erie City work, giving one more day in the local field. The solicitor also spends one day each week in the county seat."

SHIFTING IN STAFFS AND HOURS

THE MOST APPARENT DEDUCTION from replies in the mechanical section of the survey is that with a smaller force in shops, the hours of work are being shifted, juggled and alternated to accommodate peak-load hours on the machines and presses with the goal of eliminating over-time charges.

The Exeter (Calif.) *Sun,* for example, interchanges operator and compositors to keep the "mill" going during meal time and makeup time. The force works four hours on night before publication day and takes Saturday afternoon off in exchange.

The *Dawson County Review* of Glendive, Montana, has changed from eight 12-em columns to seven 12-em columns. Working schedules in the shop have been shifted to nine hours on Monday and Tuesday, ten hours on Wednesday, with Saturday afternoon off.

The Greenwich (Conn.) *Press* reports that it has "started teaching the boy in the composing room to run the Intertype to take the place of the night operator we needed two or three nights a week. Now he divides his time between the floor and the machine during evenings, saving us $20 a week. We have also re-arranged equipment to make composing room more efficient."

Other plans, similar to that above, are summarized: staggered hours for shop workmen, for the purpose of keeping the type setting machine turning over; shifting of combined office girl and reporter to machine on Monday to set early social and personal news; routing of "time" copy to shop as soon as the current issue is off the press; shop employees sign off after 44 hours work.

Many papers have revised their classifications of copy to the end that composition is speeded up by having editorials, humor columns, sports and features sent to the machine on Friday, Saturday and Monday.

The Enumclaw (Wash.) *Herald* writes: "Close editing of copy makes it possible to cut down on composition, still giving all community news. This allows shorter week for compositors. We now operate on four and one-half day basis but have not reduced wage scale."

NEW EQUIPMENT

New labor-saving and time-conserving equipment has been added by many publishers as a

means of cutting expense, improving plant and preparing for an anticipated business. The Belleville (Kans.) *Telescope* has installed a new perfecting press. New cylinder presses, capable of handling newspaper and catalog work, are being installed by several of the larger weeklies.

The Livermore (Calif.) *Herald,* like many others, has traded in old stereo metal for machine metal and has swapped all old, worn and out-of-date type for new, modern fonts. Matrix straighteners are being used by an increasingly large number of shops. The Cedar County (Nebr.) *News* relates that "use of Hancock foot-sticks enable us to give 22½ inch columns, a gain of 48 inches when we print 12 pages or 32 inches when we print only 8 pages."

The Aurora (Nebr.) *Republican-Register,* like scores of other papers in territory where natural gas is available, is finding that gas is an economy for type-setting machines and for other work where melting is needed.

The *Nebraska Signal* of Geneva, Nebraska, resultant of a consolidation of thirteen weekly newspapers, writes of mechanical economies: "Our most recent economy of importance was made possible by the coming of natural gas to this city in recent months. For many years we had heated our type-setting machines, metal pots and our mat casting box with electricity. We converted our electric metal pots and electric casting box to natural gas. A type-setting machine company wrote us electric metal pots could not be converted to natural gas pots, but this is possible if Monomelts are installed. We converted two of our type-setting machines to natural gas, experimentally, our third machine being only used part time."

"Our operators say our natural gas heat control is the most perfect they ever saw, and every operator knows what that means," the publisher adds. "Our metal pot plungers keep much cleaner than ever before."

Nearly all shops indicated they have enlisted the co-operation of employees in a drive to curtail electric lights, power and gas bills. A few write that they have printed up small signs as reminders to "Turn Off Lights While Not In Use," while many who have made their appeals verbally, accomplished the same end.

DOWN WITH "TRICK" ADS

Concerted efforts are evident in the direction of cutting down printers' fancies and desires which formerly cost money and time. Initial letters are

being subordinated to straight composition style by the Millersburg (Ohio) *Farmer-Hub*. More than one-half of the reports indicated a curtailment of hand-set heads; while complicated layouts and borders are being avoided as much as possible. Tricky typography is on the wane.

The Culver (Ind.) *Citizen* avoids complicated make-up as a means of lowering costs.

"We use time-clocks in all the departments and our charges are based on fixed hour cost, revised to meet conditions," writes the Colorado Springs (Colo.) *Farm-News*.

One enthusiastic publisher says his shop saves 30 minutes each week by insisting upon a conscientious use of a type-high gauge on casts and cuts. Three more are taking advantage of the lull in business to re-arrange equipment in order to save steps between stones and presses, between presses and drying rack and mailing table. A few are building new stock cabinets. Improved heating and lighting facilities are saving time for many shops.

PAGE SIZES AND COLUMN WIDTHS

The Lindsay (Calif.) Publishing Company reports that it piles as much advertising space into a six-column 12-em page as the average seven column paper, and thus saves considerable composition. The editor says: "Invariably only a small ad appears in the seventh column. If a small paper had larger ads this would not be true, but I have measured many and find that we average as much as the ordinary seven column weekly."

The Batesville (Ark.) *Record* has a plan of its own for saving time and work. Quoting the editor: "Our regular issue is an 8 page 7-column paper. When advertising is too scarce we can easily re-adjust our press to print a 6-column paper, eliminating 8 columns of type-setting without materially affecting the looks or quality of the paper. We have never had a kick from a subscriber."

The *Wyoming State Journal* (Lander, Wyo.) has "lengthened columns 1¼ inches, cut to 12 picas and added extra column to page, giving 256 column inches extra or equivalent to about two pages, 7-column, 19¾ inches, which cut our runs from 10 to 8 pages, saving cost in print paper, press-work, folding and mailing."

MISCELLANEOUS

Buying economies for the mechanical department are rather limited because of the nature of the products and articles used. The Waupun

(Wis.) *Leader-News* has "switched to cheaper but equal quality news ink." Others are experimenting with different brands of soap, window cleaning compounds and incidentals used around presses.

The Hastings (Minn.) *Gazette* rings up a vote for "a counter on every press," as a means of cutting costs.

The Santa Paula (Calif.) *Chronicle* has solved its paper towel problem by using the butt end of rolls, sawed to size. Many shops are using news print as towels.

The Cloquet (Minn.) *Pine Knot* has "effected an economy by casting type high instead of shell, saving time and cost of blocking. Better casts result from the change."

The Littleton (Colo.) *Independent* replies it "saved on electricity by painting woodwork white; also got more favorable rate to which we were entitled. A clock turns on the Linotype an hour before working time; so it is ready at 8 a.m. Formerly the operator stood around for an hour while waiting for the metal to become melted."

Metal melting time is being adjusted to serve the shops in many cases, with co-ordination of melting and casting for the same day.

The survey shows typography changes aside from the trend of a large number of papers which are changing from six 13-em column pages to seven 12-em size, and from seven 12-em to eight 12-em. Scores of papers are changing their typography and dress from 8 point leaded to 8 point solid. The reason: desire for "tighter" papers.

A similar paragraph might be written to show a modified attitude concerning dashes of various kinds. Many papers are omitting dashes from news briefs and a few have adopted a thinner dash for use in briefs and head lines.

One Southern publisher reports that he omits jim dashes after headings on smaller stories and eliminates cut-off rule over advertising to permit more actual space for news matter.

COLLECTIONS AND RENEWALS

THREE TRENDS STAND OUT in the circulation department. Papers are eliminating deadheads; less attempt is being made to obtain circulation outside of trade territory, and closer attention is given to the collection of circulation accounts. Here's how they do it:

The Medford (Okla.) *Patriot-Star* and *Journal* has employed a field man on a percentage basis, collecting accounts and writing human interest squibs about readers.

The Fallon (Nev.) *Eagle* reports: "We know nearly all of our local people, but outside of this community, when a subscription expires we mail notice and send two more copies of the paper and if remittance does not come for renewal, the name is dropped. Then if the subscriber wants the paper he will renew, and if not, we are not out a year's subscription. This works well."

Several papers report that they are using reputable and ambitious unemployed persons in their communities to aid in collecting subscription accounts and to obtain new subs. The cash-in-advance system, in the opinion of the Wareham (Mass.) *Courier* "eliminates the dead-beats." "Circulation sufficient to cover trading area is sought and maintained, and further circulation is not profitable," the editor points out.

The Northfield (Minn.) *News* reports: "The past year has required more concentrated attention to subscription collections and circulation maintenance than ever before. We try everything —personal solicitation, which has proven too costly for the returns obtained; sample copies to non-subs in trade area, followed by direct mail circulars with a bargain offer at the popular "one dollar" figure, giving a 9 months' introductory offer, plus a due bill good for 50 cents on classified ads. Cash-in-advance policy has been rigidly maintained even if it results in some losses—temporarily."

The Littleton (Colo.) *Independent* offers "a three-year subscription for the price of two years for those living within 25 miles."

The Browerville (Minn.) *Blade* is using personal solicitation methods, driving through rural sections, calling at every home, and concentrating on its own trade territory, a rural route at a time.

Many weekly papers in farming territory report that while they watch circulation accounts

closely, they have adopted a policy of extending all credit possible to farmers as long as present conditions exist.

ELIMINATING FREE PAPERS

The Lindsay (Calif.) Publishing Company sends no free mail copies to advertisers in city. "Either delivered or they can pick them up. This prevents getting name on list and allowing it to go to residence of store owner of sub he should pay for, or for years after he becomes a non-advertiser."

Others report that they have started attempts to place correspondents, relatives, politicians and advertisers on the bona fide "pay" list as a measure to offset legitimate losses through the inability of many to afford the expense.

H. C. Hotaling, executive secretary of the National Editorial Association, writes: "I think there is one spot where some saving could be made in the average country office. It might not amount to much in some shops, but in others it would mean a good deal. I refer to the mail list. If publishers would go over this and check off the dead material there will be a reduction in copies they are mailing to people who have never subscribed, to exchanges of no benefit to them, to subscribers who will never pay. Each additional copy of this sort means more paper, more press work, more time and mailing. There are a lot of papers that I know of that could easily eliminate from 25 to 50 copies from their lists, which should mean a saving of $25 to $35 during the year."

Other circulation savers mentioned in replies were: close count on press run, minimum number of office copies, refolding spoiled copies, checking carriers for extra copies, elimination of "useless" exchanges.

The St. James (Minn.) *Plaindealer* "has increased its expense by putting one or two men into the field on a house-to-house canvass for subs and collections. This has enabled the *Plaindealer* to keep its circulation within 100 of what it was a year ago, but by paying 50 per cent commission it has added about $600 a year to our expense of circulation."

The Livermore (Calif.) *Herald* has solved its collection problem by the installation of a system of regular monthly billing.

Having two semi-weeklies, the Cambridge Springs (Pa.) *Enterprise-News* reports that it bought a Ford car and put out a full-time man to

keep subscriptions paid to date, gather rural news, and contact the correspondents."

The Batesville (Ark.) *Record* reports that it has "substituted wood for gas as a fuel, accepting heating wood as payment on subscription, thereby materially reducing our fuel bill and, at the same time, keeping a number of subscribers (farm) with us who would have otherwise been forced to discontinue, due to our strict pay-in-advance rule." One other paper indicated that it accepted farm produce on subscription accounts of farm readers.

The *Wyoming State Journal* (Lander, Wyo.) has made a detailed study of office forms to eliminate duplication and unnecessary work. "In our subscription receipt the original goes to the customer and the duplicate serves to make office entry credits, then goes to the machine for mailing galley changes and is finally filed as permanent record."

OTHER PLANS USED

Exchanges are being culled. One paper writes that it has adopted a policy of "exchange of checks" instead of courtesies, and only one representative paper is taken from each section of the state.

The *Nebraska Signal* of Geneva, Nebraska, found that so many of its subscribers were sending the *Signal* to relatives and friends as birthday presents that it printed a special card that it sends with each subscription of this kind. Similar to its holiday gift card, the birthday present card gives the name of the person making the gift and extends congratulations.

COLLECTIONS AND RENEWALS

NINE MAJOR MOVES for economy in job printing departments are looming on the weekly newspaper horizon. Publishers of divergent types and in different classes of shops write that the following economies are being effected:

1. Group buying of news stock.
2. Group buying of bond stock.
3. Less hand composition in jobs.
4. More care in maintenance of equipment.
5. Careful preservation of ink and rollers.
6. Installation of time-saving machinery.
7. Re-arrangement of equipment.
8. Closer supervision of employees.
9. Plan for routing printing jobs.

GROUP BUYING OF NEWS PRINT

Publishers who have joined in groups for the purpose of buying news print are enthusiastic over the results. The survey indicates that the groups range in size from units of three and four in nearly every state in the Union to a purchasing unit of 100 in Missouri. Substantial savings have resulted in each instance. Group buying in bond stock and other fairly standardized papers is receiving attention in a few states.

JOB STOCK ECONOMIES

The Newport (Vt.) *Express and Democrat,* by minimizing the brands and grades of stock on hand, has brought about economies through "twinning" forms in long press runs. Several other publishers emphasized this point.

H. C. Hotaling, Executive Secretary of the National Editorial Association, writes: "More care could be taken in the purchasing of job stock by buying from one wholesale house rather than from several so that shops would not carry so many lines of paper stock. Broken reams could then be used up. Group buying would permit the placing of larger orders and securing of lower prices, provided stock could be shipped to one central point and picked up."

COMPOSITION SAVINGS

The Heron Lake (Minn.) *News* indicates a saving is made on composition and distribution by marking up more machine type on advertisements and jobs. More than 90 per cent of the survey questionnaires show this to be accepted policy in printing today.

The Winslow (Ind.) *Dispatch* reports it uses

machines more than ever before. "Have type-setting machine equipped with additional job fonts in place of handset. This keeps machine on full time and does away with one printer."

The Wareham (Mass.) *Courier* replies that it is using machine composition almost wholly and an automatic press to reduce production costs.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

The South Tacoma (Wash.) *Star* replies that it is taking "more care in maintenance of equipment. Tympan paper has undergone a similar sequence of use by being twisted, turned and reversed on job presses." Careful preservation of ink and rollers is stressed by the Velva (N. D.) *Journal*. The Jordan (Minn.) *Independent* likewise reports "keeping the shop more than ordinarily tidy tends to prevent wastage and too rapid obsolescence."

TAKING CARE OF MACHINE

Stressing the importance of taking proper care of type-setting machines, one publisher has set forth his recipe for equipment maintenance.

"Four hours a week should be spent in keeping a machine oiled and wiped clean. Besides, the spacebands and plunger should be cleaned daily. The metal should be skimmed when the plunger is cleaned. The front and the back of the mold should be cleaned daily, and the pot mouthpiece should be wiped off and the cross vents opened every day. The vise jaws should be wiped free of metal dust and scale every day. This takes about twenty minutes.

"The general oiling and wiping of the machine and the occasional oiling of the keyboard cams, and the cleaning of the rubber rolls, need not be done except at week-end intervals. The cleaning of the magazine and matrices will also be an occasional treatment. If the foregoing points are persistently neglected there will be much time lost, aggregating much more than four hours a week."

The Lander (Wyo.) *State Journal* has made a useful ink tube cabinet, putting all colors in small individual compartments slightly larger than the tubes; thus insuring that a tube is finished before another is opened. This cuts waste and saves investment in job inks.

Another printer-publisher reports that he has solved the ink problem in his shop by purchasing several inexpensive putty knives. "Now," he says, "when using ink from a can, we scrape the top from the ink needed for the job." He advises "Don't dig into the ink and form a hole, as this

causes the ink to dry into a covering scab, which is the source of most ink troubles and loss. Pour water into the top of your ink can when you are through with it, as this will protect the ink from the air and other dryness causes."

NEW EQUIPMENT

Very little new machinery has been added to the job printing shops of weekly papers during the past one and one-half years. Six per cent of the papers queried show additions to mechanical equipment. Most of this was for replacement of obsolete machinery, and not as an investment. Presses, new fonts for machines, feeders and metal saws form the major part of the new investments being made by publishers.

SHOP EFFICIENCY

Many weekly publishers write that they are making good use of added spare time by rearranging equipment to bring about a saving of time in their job printing plants. New drying racks, portable stones and mail-galley racks are frequently mentioned.

SUPERVISION OF WORKERS

Closer supervision of employees to curtail idle time, remove "soldiering" and to speed up the shop has been studied by several publishers. The Florence (Ala.) *Herald* requires a daily report of jobs finished. Cost-finding systems tend to lower non-productive time, publishers agree. One large shop which does a tremendous volume of job work reports that it has constructed a black-board in the middle of the shop, and uses it for directions on jobs, memos to men and as a barometer of production of shop presses.

PLANNING WORK

Job printers follow the rule of "run small jobs first" so we might as well adopt this as one of the fundamental rules for the management of our weekly offices, writes one printer-publisher. He continues, "It is usually only a matter of a few units of time in our shop until we have the type set and presses ready for one or two small jobs, but a large job which involves considerable composition delays the presses for hours and at the same time holds up delivery on all orders, large and small."

. . . Stock Room

PRACTICES AND PROBLEMS

FOUR STOCK ROOM PRACTICES stand out today in the job printing departments of weekly newspapers. The first, and perhaps the most important, is the use of perpetual inventories of stock; the second is the practice of buying standard stocks in quantities sufficiently large to enable buyer to obtain a discount, and close buying of infrequently used stock to avoid piling up a needless investment and cluttering up the shelving space; the third is the trend toward using every possible sheet of scrap stock for other printing jobs; the fourth is the plan of turning the less expensive grades of stock into scratch pads and other saleable forms or using this stock for self-promotion advertising purposes.

Of the replies received, 14 per cent of the publishers indicated use of stock inventories.

One Pacific coast publisher writes "We have made a successful effort during the past few months to close out many kinds of slow moving stock, by making up special forms in which it could be used. Individual bridge score cards, or pads for the bridge fan hostess, gives you an idea of some of the jobs. Broken reams of colored stock sell in individual stationery sets."

The St. James (Minn.) *Plaindealer* reports it made better use of its capital by increasing the job stock turn-over from 5.5 to 6.7 times during 1931. The Enterprise (Ore.) *Record-Chieftain* reports it is using all scrap stock in other jobs or scratch pads, and ever since the war has utilized the heavy twine and wrapping paper which comes with bundles of stock for tying bundles and packages. Another weekly reports that larger sizes of package papers bring greater economy of both time and material; often can get one or two more pieces from larger sheet than from two smaller ones. The Claremont (Calif.) *Courier* writes that it sold $300 worth of scratch pads last year. The Duchesne (Utah) *Record* is making use of many stock room plans for saving. Scores of others indicated that they follow the economies suggested above.

The Cambridge Spring (Pa.) *Enterprise-News* presents one view of a two-sided question: "In job printing, instead of cutting prices, we met competition with a higher grade of paper, advertising that fact, and maintained prices." The other side of this two-headed monster, presented by the Breckenridge (Minn.) *Gazette-Telegram*,

follows: "Four years ago we sold all letterheads on high grade bond, running about 25c per pound. Today we use 11c per pound bond. The wholesale houses of the cities, with their cheap prices, are our largest competitors. To meet these prices and make a profit, is the problem."

As a suggestion for the solution of part of the difficulties arising in the stock department of the average weekly paper, the writer might point out from his own experience that it would be worthwhile for each publisher and printer to make a real study of the common stocks. This should include spoilage allowances, correct procedure for figuring stock, how to unpack, how to stack, how to determine right and wrong side, how to handle grains and water-marks, proper jogging and slip-sheeting, and how to combat the "demon" static. Some national paper manufacturer could well afford to issue a useful booklet on this subject, and I am quite sure that it would meet with a hearty welcome by publishers, printers and apprentices.

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW

AN INITIAL FINE OF 25 CENTS

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